

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 07851 211803Z
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
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USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 7851

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, US, IS
SUBJ: SHARON HOLDS FORTH

1. BLACKWILL PAID JUNE 21 COURTESY CALL ON MINISTER
OF AGRICULTURE ARIK SHARON. AFTER EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES,
AND BRIEF DISCUSSION ABOUT THE PRICE OF TOMATOES, SHARON
POURED OUT AN HOUR LONG CASCADE ON THE PRESENT STATE OF THE
PEACE PROCESS.

2. IT WAS VINTAGE SHARON, AND THUS FAMILIAR STUFF TO WASH-
INGTON. HOWEVER, IT MAY BE OF SOME INTEREST THAT FOUR
DAYS FOLLOWING THE CABINET ENDORSEMENT OF ISRAELI ANSWERS
TO THE U.S. QUESTIONS, AN ENDORSEMENT AND FORMULATION WHICH
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SHARON SUPPORTED, THE MINISTER WAS UNEQUIVOCAL ON
TWO POINTS. NO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, WILL WITH-
DRAW ITS FORCES FROM THE WEST BANK, NOR AGREE TO RESTRICT
THEIR MOVEMENT THEREIN, UNTIL RELATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND
ITS NEIGHBORS ARE LIKE THOSE AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN
EUROPE. FURTHER, NO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT WILL SIGN AWAY
THE RIGHT OF ISRAELIS TO SETTLE ON THE WEST BANK. SHARON

STRESSED BEGIN'S AUTONOMY PLAN COULD BE ALTERED. ISRAEL WOULD BE FLEXIBLE CONCERNING THE LINKS BETWEEN THE WEST BANK AND JORDAN. BUT ON THE ISSUES OF SECURITY AND SETTLEMENT THERE COULD BE NO GIVE IN ISRAEL'S POSITION. SHARON SAID THAT GOES FOR A GOVERNMENT HEADED BY GOLDA, RABIN, PERES, BEGIN, AND PAUSE, PAUSE, WEIZMAN* THE COUNTRY WOULDN'T STAND FOR IT AND IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH RELIGION.

3. COMMENT: SHARON WAS, OF COURSE, DESCRIBING HIS VERY OWN CAMELOT. IF PEACE HANGS IN THE BALANCE, WE BELIEVE MANY ISRAELIS, PERHAPS EVEN A MAJORITY, WOULD VIOLATE SHARON'S COMMANDMENT THAT ISRAELIS SHOULD RETAIN IN PERPETUITY THE RIGHT TO SETTLE ON THE WEST BANK. THE SECURITY ISSUE IS ANOTHER MATTER. ON THAT POINT, THIRTY YEARS OF FEAR AND DISTRUST, AND FIVE WARS GIVE SHARON LOTS OF COMPANY IN THIS COUNTRY. HE IS NOT WHISTLING A SOLITARY TUNE.
LEWIS

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